

# Black Caps all rounder Corey Anderson to captain NZ A team against India A

Three matches at Bay Oval – tomorrow, Sunday and next Tuesday – shape as seriously important for Black Caps all rounder Corey Anderson if he's going to make it to a second World Cup in England in June next year.

Anderson will captain New Zealand A against India A in the three day-night matches, having not played for over a month since returning from the United Arab Emirates with a heel injury in early November.

Since then the injury-plagued cricketer has had another yet health setback.

"I've had a dose of shingles for the last month so I've been trying to fight off that, but I'm just back into it and my body is feeling good again, and I'm feeling excited for this A series."

The 28-year-old's career has never quite hit the heights predicted when he burst on to the international scene as a hard hitting middle order batsman and lively left arm pace bowler six years ago. On New Years' Day 2014, he smashed 131 not out from 47 balls against the West Indies in Queenstown. Three months earlier he'd made a test century against Bangladesh in Dhaka. They remain his only three-figure scores for the Black Caps.

But back surgery just over 12 months ago has made a huge difference.

"The back is feeling absolutely great. It's not playing on my mind or anything so I feel like I'm getting back to where I

can be," Anderson says.

He played the first two of the T20 Internationals against Pakistan on the current Black Caps tour before coming home with the injury. Before that he'd been playing with the New Zealand A side in Dubai and Abu Dhabi – but only in white ball cricket.

"Look test cricket is fantastic. I loved playing it and I would love to play it again," he said yesterday after training at Bay Oval.

"But if I look at things in regards to my body and my health, it potentially jeopardises other formats of the game. Having to park up one format right now and focus on the T20s and the one-dayers just means I can control a little bit more of what I'm doing and gives me the best chance to play as much cricket as possible."

In his opinion, the matches against India A in the next few days are "massive".

"With not playing any red ball cricket, there's not as many games to play. So these games are crucial, not just for me but lots of the guys, to put our hands up for maybe the matches against Sri Lanka after Christmas."

Before his heel injury and the shingles, Anderson's recent form had been patchy. In seven T20 and 50 over matches in the UAE, he scored more than 40 only once. But that was a day when he showed just how destructive he can be.

It was his most recent game, on November 2, and he slammed 44 not out off just 25 balls against Pakistan. The Black Caps lost the match when Pakistan chased down the target of 154 in the final over.

He bowled economically in both formats until the heel injury flared up but knows he has to contribute with both bat and

ball if he's to be part of the Blacks Caps again.

"I'd love to score runs in the next few days. That's every batter's dream. But the crucial thing is my bowling, to show that I can still fulfill that role in the New Zealand side. If I get runs, fantastic, but I still have to look at that end goal of getting picked for that World Cup side which is the main focus.

"There's going to be a lot more ups and downs during the summer and if we can plateau those and not have the big troughs, then hopefully come World Cup time, the whole team's firing."

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